

I am a parent and an advocate with Michigan Alliance for Families (4 counties in middle of state). My son is 13 and in a cognitively impaired classroom in a Middle School in Shiawassee County. I have had numerous occasions to stop into the school this year because Nathan had a major surgery in September and was confined to a wheelchair for 2 months, and only attended school part-time. Then when he did return full time, he still had issues that required my assistance on occasion. His classroom has a closet that has been carpeted from floor to ceiling that they use as a "seclusion" room. I cannot remember a time that I stopped in that a student was not sitting in this closet and a para-pro was not standing in the doorway blocking them in. They never shut the door, but there is always someone standing in front of it when a student is in the closet. There are also desks in the room with straps on them, this has been happening since Nate was in 1st grade in the county.

I also was a substitute teacher 5 years ago in an elementary school in the county, Emerson, in which there is an Emotionally Impaired room in the basement where they have a carpeted 3 X 3 room with a door where I witnessed them close young students in and leave them in there with the door closed. When you question it, they indicate that this is what the parents want. The RESD sends all parents a form at the beginning of the year asking how they want to be notified when they have to use restraint and seclusion with their child. I sent a copy of mine to the Lt. Governor.

I understand that the schools are saying this isn't happening, but it is to students of all ages. Unfortunately, many of these students cannot talk, so they can't come home and tell us that it is happening to them. They don't have a voice. They are overloading classrooms...Nate's has 18 students with severe cognitive impairments, and it is just too much for one teacher to handle.

I hope they listen to the parents, but something has to be done to help the teachers too. Class sizes have to be adjusted to help them, and better supports need to be put into place.

Sincerely,

Lynn K. Grubb

Parent, Advocate

Executive Director

The Arc Shiawassee County